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PRESS RELEASE FROM THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

More than 1,100 UK babies born addicted to drugs in the last year, new figures show

- *Number of babies born suffering Neonatal Withdrawal Symptoms increasing in the UK*
- *Centre for Social Justice calls for more abstinence-based treatment*

More than 20 babies are born every week in the UK addicted to drugs, new figures reveal.

Many of those babies will be addicted to heroin and the state-supplied substitute methadone – which the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) said proves treatment in the UK is unambitious.

A total of 1,129 babies were born addicted to drugs last year – an 11 per cent increase since the year the Coalition came to power.

Alex Burghart, CSJ Policy Director, said: “This is a tragedy for the mothers and their children born into the horrors of addiction.

“We should want the best start in life for all children, but as these figures show, many have one of the worst possible starts.”

It comes just months after the CSJ report *No Quick Fix* labelled the UK the addicted man of Europe and criticised the fact more than 40,000 heroin addicts had been parked on substitutes like methadone for more than four years.

Mr Burghart added: “We have a ludicrous situation where the NHS is weaning many children off the highly addictive substances the State was supplying their mothers.

“Although methadone has a place in helping addicts move towards full recovery, too many are simply parked on it and forgotten. We call on the Government to switch more funding to residential treatment – the most effective way of helping people break free from heroin addiction.”

It is estimated that up to 350,000 children have a drug addicted parent and that drug abuse costs the UK economy £15billion a year.

ENDS

The statistics are available [here](#).

For media inquiries, please contact Ross Reid from the Centre for Social Justice on 07780 707322 or Nick Wood of Media Intelligence Partners Ltd on 07889 617003.

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) is an independent think tank established in 2004 to put social justice at the heart of British politics. In June, the CSJ was awarded UK Social Policy Think Tank of the Year 2013 at Prospect magazine's Think Tank Awards.

In 2007 the CSJ published its landmark report, Breakthrough Britain. This publication, which set out 190 evidence-based policy recommendations to tackle poverty in Britain, transformed the social policy and political landscape and was awarded Publication of the Year by Prospect Magazine in 2008.

Since Breakthrough Britain the CSJ has published over 40 reports which have shaped government policy and influenced opposition parties. These have included the seminal papers Dying to Belong and Dynamic Benefits, which has led the Coalition Government's welfare reforms.

Further to this, the CSJ manages an Alliance of over 300 of the most effective grass roots, poverty-fighting organisations. The CSJ is able to draw upon the expertise and experience of Alliance charities for research work and media inquiries. Journalists wishing to conduct grass-roots research into social problems can be put in touch with front-line charity directors and staff.